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**ENZI URGES FDA NOMINEE TO WORK WITH CONGRESS
TO IMPROVE AGENCY'S STATUS, ENSURE PUBLIC TRUST**

Washington, D.C. - Saying the role of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has never been more vital to public health, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee) today called on the President's nominee to head the FDA to work with Congress to implement reforms needed to improve public confidence in the safety of a range of issues from prescription drugs to food and consumer products.

"It is imperative that we return the FDA to its prior status as the gold standard of our government's regulatory process and the envy of the world," Enzi said Thursday following the confirmation hearing on Dr. Lester W. Crawford, now acting head of the agency. "Recent events have called into question this standard in the eyes of the public, but Dr. Crawford's nomination as permanent Commissioner makes it clear that the President is committed to restoring the FDA to its fully-mandated authority."

Earlier this year, 17 members of the HELP Committee sent a letter to the President urging him to nominate a Commissioner to provide the FDA with "greater clarity and certainty in its mission" to protect our food and drug supplies. The agency has been without a confirmed Commissioner for over a year.

The HELP Committee's recent hearings to review of the FDA's drug approval and post-marketing surveillance systems examined the controversies surrounding prescription drugs and reviewed options for strengthening the nation's drug safety system. "I trust you share our concerns and that you will continue to work with us to evaluate and eventually implement the necessary reforms to the system," Enzi told Crawford.

Enzi also urged Crawford to work with Congress to address last year's flu vaccine shortage and assess steps needed to take to prevent a similar shortage from occurring again.

"I intend for this Committee to review what happened and to determine how we should respond to the shortage, which raised serious questions about both the FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention," Enzi said. "One thing we must do, however, is attract companies back into the vaccine business. Relying on one or two companies to produce some of our most critical vaccines is a prescription for a public health disaster."